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All you need to know to win

Eat Mat!
Wrestling
special



brain eating • Gaydar • barefoot waterskiing • Feral Cheryl • Ben Dover • 5-legged co

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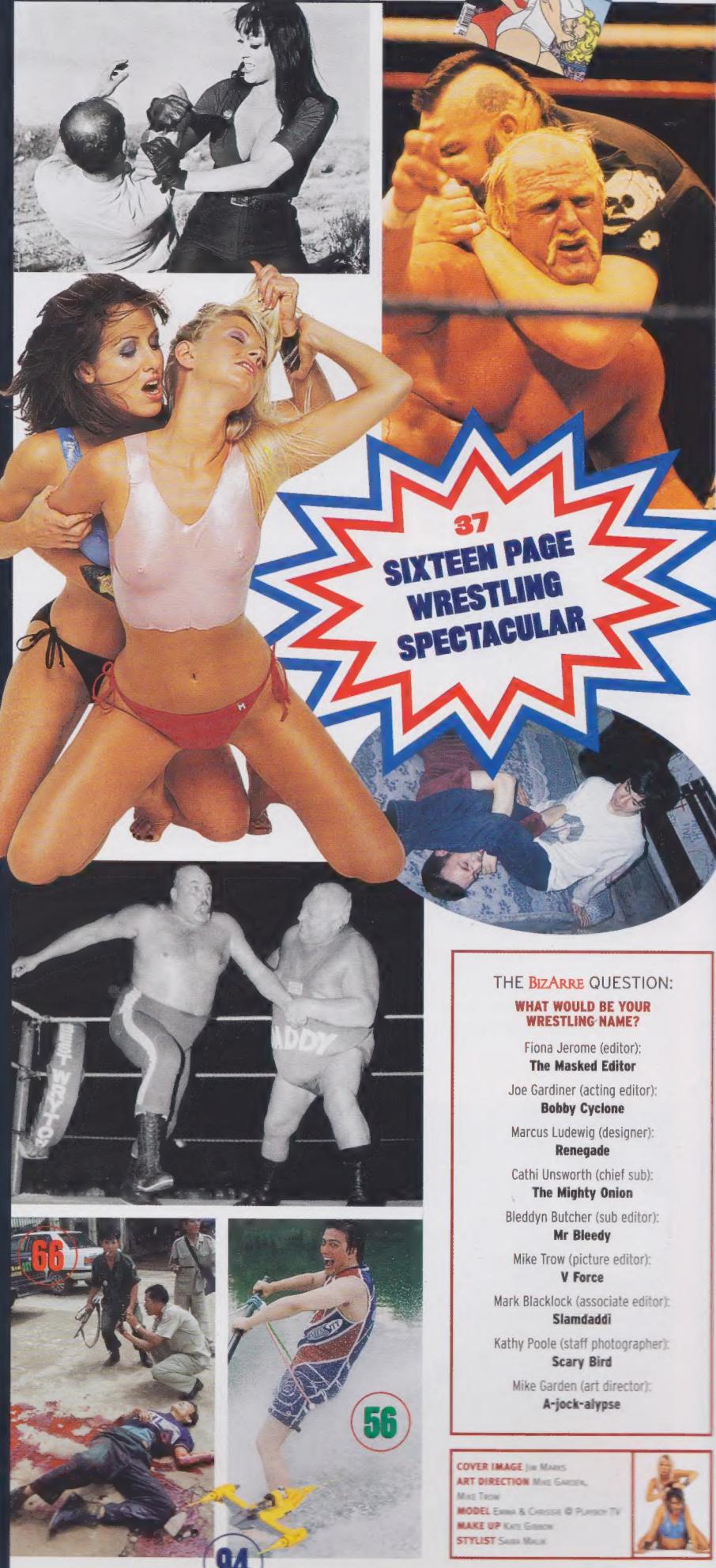
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THE BIZARRE QUESTION:

WHAT WOULD BE YOUR WRESTLING NAME?

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GREETINGS GRAPPLE FANS

Eat Mat!
16 page
wrestling
special



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- Al Snow - WWF Champion



- Phil Powers - UWA star
- KO competition prizes



- US v UK tag match
- Jesse Ventura - Wrestling with politics



- Street Wrestling - The backyard superstars



- Playboy models
- Catfights
- André the Giant



- Screen scrappers - Bitch fights on the big screen

**ROUND
1**

Remember the glory days of Big Daddy, Giant Haystacks and those mad grannies waving their handbags? The 1970s were British wrestling's Golden Age, and everything was easy! easy! easy! Then came the WWF. The American goons with masks gripped the game in a stranglehold and the Brits were forced into submission. TOM FORDYCE charts the rise and fall of the thigh-slapping sport of stout kings

SATURDAY AFTERNOON, 4 o'clock. A nothing sort of time. A rather dull and unexceptional part of the day. Can anyone remember what they were doing at 4pm last Saturday? Of course not. Nothing happens at 4pm on a Saturday.

But once upon a time, it was special. It was a magical hour to millions. It was

BLAM! It was WALLOP! It was OOOH! and AAAH! and GERROFF HIM! Sometimes it was BOOOO! and later, much later, it wasn't very noisy at all. But it was always wrestling.

Hard to believe now, but wrestlers were once bigger than footballers. Men like Les Kellett, a man so hard that catching him in the face with a forearm smash was likened to hitting Leeds Town Hall. Adrian Street, son of a Welsh miner, dressed like a honky George Clinton as he stepped into the ring via his wife's bowed back. Kendo Nagasaki, the classic masked villain, taking on the majestic 672lb of Giant Haystacks. Mick McManus, the boy from the Old Kent Road who became friends with the Rolling Stones and hung out with Raquel Welch. Sky High Lee, swallowing crushed lightbulbs and asking women to throw darts at his back. Yup, they were stars alright.

As much a part of that period in British history as secondary moderns, shipyard strikes and



Mean machine: the mighty Giant Haystacks

Good fella: Big Daddy

sensational sideburns, they were a million miles away from today's sleek, handsome sporting heroes. Kellett didn't take part in his first bout until just before his 59th birthday. Clown prince in the eyes of the crowd, his fellow wrestlers knew him as an unhinged maniac. He once turned up for a show with a pus-filled hand the size of a boxing glove, having been bitten

by a pig on his notoriously backward farm. Rather than be bothered with a doctor, he simply instructed his opponent to stamp on the

"It's not ballet"

Al Snow, current WWF hardcore champion

How often do you wrestle?

We go anything from eight to ten days on the road and then have four or five days off.

What's the biggest crowd you've wrestled in front of?

I guess 50,000 or 60,000, at places like the Toronto Skydome. That's the biggest I've been involved in. But it's actually the smaller venues where the atmosphere is best. It doesn't take so long for the reaction to travel back to you.

What sort of training do you do?

I do a mixture of weights and cardio work, plus some martial arts stuff to practice the training I have, just to keep limbered up and stretched out. Flexibility is a big thing.

What's your sporting background?

Basically martial arts like Jujitsu. I've also studied

Do you get hurt in the ring?

Yeah. At this point in time in my career without exaggeration, every single day something hurts. Those are general wear-and-tear injuries and then there are specific injuries I've had. In February, I fractured my arm; last year, I dislocated my shoulder, broke both my thumbs and cracked two ribs. One thumb broke when I landed on it, the other hit on some guy's face. It's not ballet.

How long can you fight at the top level?

You won't find people wrestling in their 50s and 60s. Physically, it's just too much on people. I'll be 36 next month and, if I can hang in there another good, solid, no-embarrassment four months, I'll be a happy man.

What sort of cash are you earning?

It earns you a good standard of living. But it's

a couple of different types of judo and Thai kick-boxing. I got into wrestling as a teenager, it was what I wanted to do.

very hard with all the travelling, keeping you away from your family.

Do you stick to a special diet?

I just try to keep my proteins high. Then I basically eat anything that doesn't move too fast.

Do you get loads of fan mail?

Head gets more than I do. But that's alright, because that way I get to read it to Head, and that way I get the attention too. I try to reply to as much as possible, but it comes to you in bundles. Last bunch I got, some stuff dates back to October, so it can take a while. I get letters from all around the world.

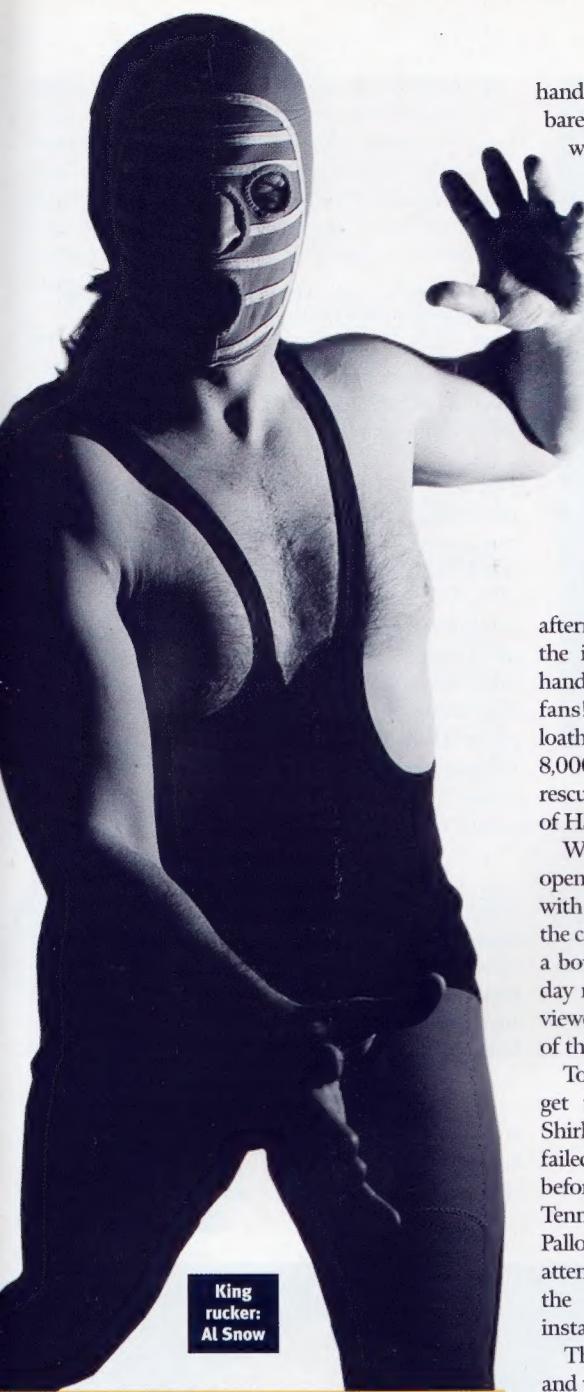
Head is an international superstar. I get a lot from England and Germany. I get stopped in the street a whole lot too. When I go out for dinner I'll be asked for autographs. Do I take Head with me? Of course! It's not like Head can walk around on his own.

Is there much attention from the ladies?

Yeah, a lot of times. I had a girl one time lift up her top and show me her chest.

Do you have any famous fans?

I've met a lot of the old-time wrestlers, and also



King
rucker:
Al Snow

people like Jeff Bridges and that guy from *Con Air*, Nicholas Cage. I've also met Dan Marino. To them, we're the celebrities, but to us they're the celebrities.

Were you a fan of 1970s British wrestling?

I love British wrestling. I love the tactical aspect of it. I've watched and assimilated many of the British styles into my own. Not so much now, because the business has changed and I can't utilise as much of the mat-work as I could, but I was a big student of British wrestling in the 1970s and used to watch a lot of tapes. I know the big names like Big Daddy and Giant Haystacks very well.

What's your favourite move?

Probably the snow-plough. It's pretty much like a body-slam. You get them in a slam and then just drop them right down into a cracking rib-buster.

And your least favourite move?

Someone else putting me through the tapes. I don't mind doing it myself, obviously, but it's not a whole lot of fun when someone else does it to you.

hand. Blood and pus sprayed everywhere. Big Les barely blinked. Even in his 70s, he would happily walk into a bar and order a Cognac. A full pint of Cognac, that is.

TV was wrestling's lifeblood. Lew Grade had begun it all in 1955, impressed by televised bouts in the States. For 33 years, it was the mainstay of ITV's Saturday

Viewing figures were in freefall. Standards were down. There were only so many times people could watch fat men lumbering round the ring. Dyke's money went into football, starting the boom that transformed the game over the past ten years. The promoters offered their shows to the fledgling Sky TV, only to find themselves confronted by Aussie execs who'd never heard of Big Daddy or

At its peak, 8,000,000 punters would tune in to see Big Daddy rescue a weedy tag-team partner from the clutches of Haystacks

afternoon programming. At 4pm on *World of Sport*, the immaculately-coiffured Dickie Davies would hand over to Kent Walton. "Greetings, grapple fans!" sang Walton. Dickie later admitted to loathing wrestling. It didn't matter. At its peak, 8,000,000 punters would tune in to see Big Daddy rescue a weedy tag-team partner from the clutches of Haystacks.

While the wrestlers became national stars, opening supermarkets and playing pro-am golf with the best of them, they seldom saw much of the cash. The most Jackie 'Mr TV' Pallo ever got for a bout was £85 and that was for a FA Cup Final day match-up with McManus seen by 12,000,000 viewers. But, without the TV exposure, the giants of the ring were nothing.

To get on the box required a gimmick, a name, to get the punters going. Big Daddy, christened Shirley Crabtree after the Brontë novel, tried and failed as Mr Universe and The Battling Guardsman before promoter brother Max pulled a name from Tennessee Williams' *Cat On A Hot Tin Roof*. Jackie Pallo got lucky when, on the first-ever TV bout, he attempted a dropkick and crashed plumb-first onto the corner-post. Bruised pride or not, he was instantly famous.

Then there was Kendo. The idea of a man in a red and white-striped mask being scary now may seem laughable. But, back in the 1970s, Kendo was feared like no-one since Dr Death. Sadly, just as Dr Death was revealed to be Paul Lincoln, an Australian from the very margins of small-town showbiz, Kendo was far from the Japanese Mafia warrior of popular wrestling myth.

Unsurprisingly, former horse-box mechanic Peter Thornley – for it was he – went to great lengths to protect his identity. Only at the very end of his career would he allow himself to be unmasked and, by then, British pro wrestling was in its death-throes, staggering about the ring ripe for the flying head-kick that would finish it off.

It's all over

THE MAN TO deliver the blow was Greg Dyke, now BBC Director-General, then newly-appointed head of ITV Sport. Ignoring Giant Haystacks' threat to break his neck for doing so, Dyke pulled pro wrestling from his schedules in 1988, claiming it was too downmarket and lowbrow for the modern audience. And he was right.

McManus. Given a choice between lame Brit wrestling at £10,000 an hour or the brash razzmatazz of the WWF at £500 a pop, Murdoch's minions chose the latter.

British wrestling, like those other post-war favourites, speedway and greyhound racing, went into freefall. Giant Haystacks became a debt-collector. Pallo lost a fortune trying to become a promoter. Adrian Street moved to Florida to open and run a wrestling school. Kellett opened a transport cafe in Bradford. More surprisingly, McManus got into antiques.

The lucky ones got out early. Jimmy Saville had long since decided to concentrate on providing material for poor impressionists, having fought 106 sell-out bouts before TV and radio stardom called. Brian Glover, once Erik Tanberg, the Blond Bomber from Sweden, went from selling Stan Ogden a window-cleaning business on *Coronation Street* to the Royal Shakespeare Company, via a masterful performance in *Kes*.

Many of them simply went into retirement, crippled by the injuries picked up by wrestling night after night on hard mats. A reunion in 1995 was described as looking like a gathering of hip-replacement patients. Mick McManus admitted that the majority struggled to get out of bed most days. Some people wondered how that could be, when every man and his dog knew this 'sport' was never really a sport at all. It was all fixed, they said. How could you get injured when every fall and move was glorified play-acting?

Well, there's fixed and there's fixed. Make no bones about it, the results of the bouts were pre-determined. You couldn't bet on the result. But they weren't choreographed or rehearsed. The wrestlers ad-libbed according to the reaction of the crowd. The moves were for real. Nasty injuries frequently happened.

The blood was genuine, although its production was pre-planned. A common trick was to Sellotape a sliver of a razorblade to a finger, nicking yourself delicately in the face when on the floor following a brutal Boston crab or hip-throw.

For some, this was enough to condemn the spectacle as a low-down, dirty con-trick. The *News of the World* delighted in running undercover 'exposes' of shows. But, as promoter Max Crabtree once said, whoever wants to see two men circling around each other slowly for 20 minutes, Olympic-style? If you want to see men diving off the top rope, smashing each other into the corner-posts and being thrown clean into the crowd, a touch of scripting was required.

"The Prime Minister is not a fan"

Flying Phil Powers, current UWA star

ROUND

2



How often do you wrestle?

You can see me on Live! TV every other week, and the tapings are once a month. That's a comedown from what I used to do, wrestling every other night but, at

the moment, I'm aiming everything towards the TV.

What's the biggest crowd you've wrestled in front of?

We did a show at Crystal Palace with about 1,700 in and Blackpool we had 350 for the afternoon and 700 for the evening.

What sort of training do you do?

I just do wrestling-specific stuff. I'd like to train more but, at the minute, I don't get as much time to train as I'd like. When I do, it's stuff like holds and falls.

What's your sporting background?

I've been wrestling for the UWA since the start. Before that, I was wrestling for

other promoters in Britain and Germany. It was a childhood dream for me, wrestling. I started doing it at 14. I was travelling the country from show to show, and then finally got the chance to go in the ring myself. I'm now 24. I'm a big fan of American wrestling, but also the British stuff.

Do you get hurt in the ring?

What you're doing is a really, really dangerous thing, and you can get immensely hurt. You have to learn to fly about the ring properly. It's a professional game. If something happens, it can go very wrong. Both Davey Boy Smith (aka the British Bulldog) and his tag-team partner

Tommy Billington are in wheelchairs now. I've had severe whiplash from being clothes-lined.

How long can you fight at the top level?

Some of the older wrestlers, my heroes, did it till late, but you don't see Phil Parkes, the old West Ham goalie, still playing today, do you? It should be the same in wrestling. I'll do it for another ten years, and then work behind the scenes.

What sort of cash are you earning?

It's not enough to look after me and my family, but I haven't got any other job at the minute. It's under my contract that I can't say exactly what I'm on. The more TV coverage we get and the more arses on seats at house shows, that's where we'll get more money from.

Do you stick to a special diet?

I eat plenty of fish and carbohydrates.

Do you get much fan mail?

I've had quite a lot of mail, but that all goes to the UWA, so I don't see much of it. I think I get

30-40 letters a week, which isn't bad. It's good to be recognised walking down the street.

Is there much attention from the ladies?

Very much so. But I'm a family man, so I treat them the same as any other fans. I give them a smile and then that's it.

Do you have any famous fans?

Not really, only your Jimmy Greaves. Some of the people you see on Live! TV. No one really mega stands out. It's just your Mrs Mertons. Not the Prime Minister or anything.

Were you a fan of 1970s British wrestlers?

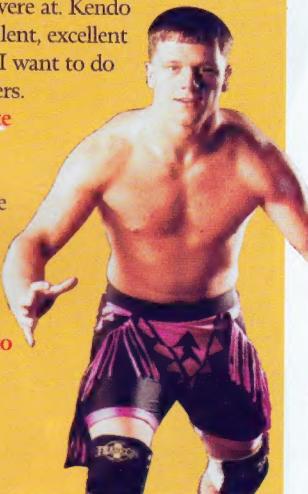
It was wrestling at its best. They were my heroes and I have so much respect for them. The top ones were at such a high standard, and I just hope some of us young ones can get up to the standard they were at. Kendo Nagasaki was an excellent, excellent villain. The last thing I want to do is bury the old wrestlers.

What's your favourite move?

Drop-kick off the top rope. You stand on the top rope, jump off, you put your feet in the air and kick them in the face.

And your least fave to be hit with?

It would have to be something like a sleeper-hold. Nasty!

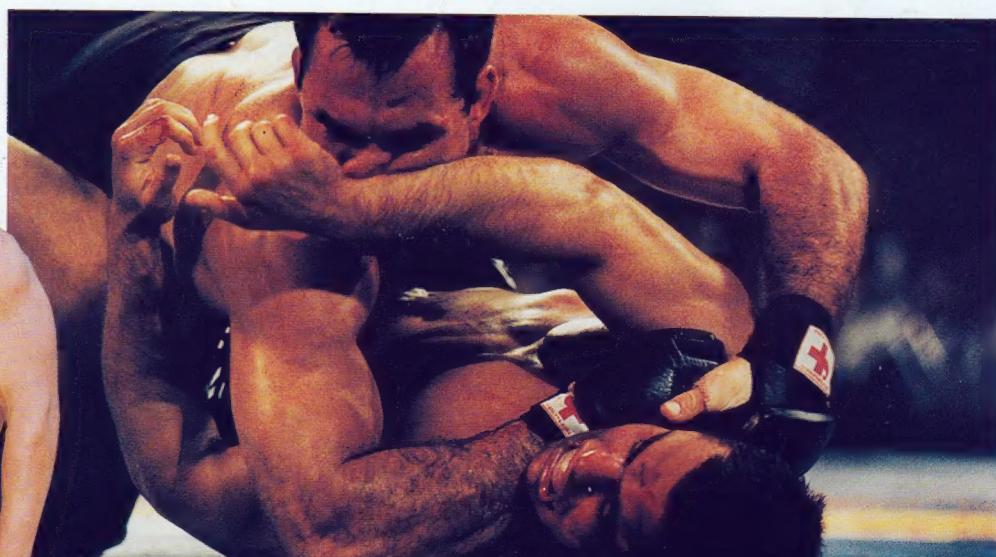


Back to the Future

NOW, A DECADE after British wrestling disappeared from our screens, it's back. OK, it's only Live! TV, but it's something. Attendances at bouts, like those at the dogs and the speedway, are making a surprise recovery. Younger promoters, schooled in the American ways of glitz and glamour and more family-oriented marketing, are putting on shows that, whisper it quietly, are actually making money.

"It's a building process," says Paul Martin, one of the new breed, "but we're excited about the response from the general public. Wrestling in the UK became a very niche market, and we want to make it a big family occasion. If you can get kids into it, they drag their families along."

"We draw on inspiration from the WWF and WCW. We try to create characters that the general public have an affinity with. There are storylines that develop from week to week with the



Left: Hulk Hogan. Above and right: Ultimate Fighting

The razzmatazz, music, lights and lasers, like a Naz entrance to the ring, combine to give them decent wrestling



shows and that maintains a loyal weekly following. And, on top of the characters, the razzmatazz, music, lights and lasers, like a Naz entrance to the ring, combine to give them decent wrestling. Wrestling never really went out of fashion in the UK. The attention simply switched to the stuff coming out of the States, and that's the direction we're coming from."

The WWF itself, after a mid-1990s slump that saw Hulk Hogan admitting to steroid abuse and Ted Turner's World Championship Wrestling overtake in the ratings, has re-invented itself as a brasher, darker, more violent product, partly in response to an increase in the popularity of no-holds-barred fighting. While the hardcore stuff has made an impact over here, few promoters believe it threatens the current mini-revival.

"We have no problem with ultimate fighting," says Paul. "It's another form of entertainment, but it's mainly one-off shows. We're doing something rather different, trying to create a following, getting people to know the characters and become involved in what's happening. And anyway, wrestling can be anything you want it to be. We all benefit from the success of each other."

The history of pro wrestling

- The first recorded instance of wrestling is found in the SBC writings of Homer.
- Admired by conquering Roman hordes, wrestling is taken back from Greece to the amphitheatres and becomes a huge draw.
- By the Middle Ages, wrestling is on the curriculum of every rich kid in the land. Richard the Lionheart is famed for his skills on the mat, while Henry XIII busts some flash moves in front of the French at the Field of Cloth of Gold.
- The commercial era begins in the USA in the 1800s. Travelling shows cross the country, giving local meatheads the chance to make pots of cash.
- Between 1900 and 1914, the English-speaking world goes wrestle-crazy. The 1904 bout between Georges Hackenschmidt, the Russian Lion, and Ahmed Madrali, the Terrible Turk, is dubbed 'the Fight of the Century'. 'Hack' goes on to write books on German philosophy and socialise with George Bernard Shaw.
- At the end of World War I, wrestling makes a strong comeback in the US. Big-name draws include Toots Mondt and Ed 'Strangler' Lewis.
- In the biggest change the game has ever seen, the 'All-in' style is introduced by promoter Atholl Oakeley in 1930, paving the way for the modern professional style. Bouts are no longer won by forcing an opponent's shoulder to the floor for a count of three. The whole body can now be attacked.
- The late 1930s see a serious slump in fortunes. Unlicensed and uncontrolled, bouts become increasingly violent.
- Post-war, new regulations are introduced. Named the Mountevans Rules after the peer of the realm who thrashed them out, they take wrestling into the TV era.
- In 1955, wrestling makes its nationwide TV debut. It becomes the most popular 'sport' on the box. Even the Queen admits to watching.

WIN! GRAPPLE GEAR WIN! GRAPPLE GEAR WIN! GRAPPLE GEAR

BECAUSE WE AT **BIZARRE** like to provide a thorough and rounded experience for you lot we've cut a deal with the extreme rockers at Earache records to offer you some grapple-crazy accompaniments to your wrestling reading. We have ten goody bags each containing a copy Earache's top notch *Extreme Music* CD featuring the likes of White Zombie and Megadeth, an ECW wrestling T-shirt and an

exclusive copy of the video to Iron Monkey's 'Supagorgonizer', featuring clips from the Extreme Championship Wrestling federation. These videos will not be available in the shops.

To win a goody bag simply send your answer to the following question on a postcard marked "Shirley Crabtree" to John Brown Competition 3, PO BOX 20139, W10 6GU.

What was Big Daddy's chant?

A Going down! Going down! You're going down!

B Bellyflop! Bellyflop! Bellyflop!

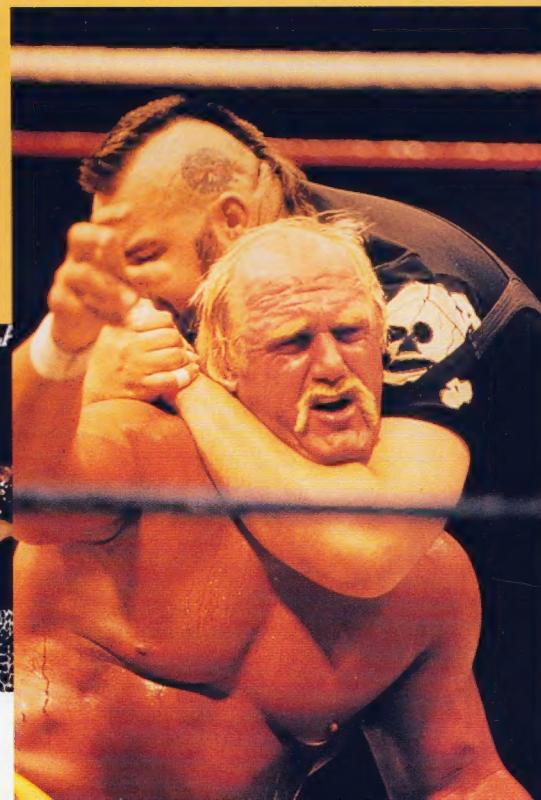
C Easy! Easy! Easy?

WIN! Fight action

Win a pair of tickets to see the WWF REBELLION SHOW

The World Wrestling Federation's SOLD OUT WWF REBELLION show will be at Birmingham's National Indoor Arena on 2 October 1999. You can see this spectacular even live and exclusive on SKY BOX OFFICE. For Information call 0990 800 888.

BIZARRE has teamed up with SKY BOX OFFICE to offer two readers the chance to win a PAIR OF TICKETS to what will be the last chance to see the stars of the WWF in the UK this century. We'll transport the lucky winners to the show and put them up overnight, too. There's also some great official merchandise for the five runner-up prize winners.



TRUMP PL

All you have to do is tell us the name of the wrestler who famously never spoke. Was it:

- Kendo Hiroshima
- Ken Donut
- Kendo Nagasaki

Send your answer – one entry only per person – to:

WRASSLIN!
John Brown Competitions 3
PO Box 20139
London W10 6GU

to reach us by 14 September 1999.

Transport to the WWF show only available to UK entrants. Usual terms and conditions apply and are available on request from the editorial address.

SKY
box office

Titans of Terror 3

ROUND

In the mad mind of MUDSKUNK, master of the World of Fighting website, the five greatest UK and US wrestlers met in a tag-team fight to the death. Join ace commentators Spiderman and Quincy ringside...

Spiderman: WELCOME TO THE World of Fighting US v UK tag-wrestling deathmatch...

Quincy: ...let me stop you there, Spidey – some of these guys are dead already – isn't that giving the living combatants an unfair advantage?

S: Absolutely – that's why we've employed evil genius Stephen Hawking to use SECRET DARK BIOLOGY to create special clones of dead wrestlers Big Daddy, Giant Haystacks and André the Giant.

Q: Let's look at the card:

S: In the Stars and Stripes corner, we have the all-time heroes of the WWF...

Q: The World Wildlife Fund?

S: No, Quincy, that would be 'World Wrestling Federation' – but we certainly have some 'wild' characters in the ring tonight!

Q: Heh, heh – that's 'wild' as in 'psychotic blood-craving wrestlemania death-boys', I hope!

S: What else? Representing the US, we have long-time 1980s champ, 'Nature Boy' Ric Flair; 1990s grandmaster of grapple, 'Stone Cold' Steve Austin; freak of nature, André the Giant; Hulk Hogan, the children's favourite, and religious zealot and crap shot, Mr T! Fighting for Blighty, we have the very best of Saturday afternoon wrestling: ex-World Middle-weight champ Danny 'Danny Boy' Collins; The Man With 1,000 Holds, Johnny Saint; moustachioed gay icon, Mark 'Rollerball' Rocco and, last but by no stretch least, the deceased pie-scoffing titans of British wrestling, Giant Haystacks and Big Daddy!

Q: First up in our specially-reinforced World of Fighting arena are Ric Flair and Rollerball Rocco – Rollerball's raring to go: check the moustache-twitching on that firm-thighed ex-World Champion and Bob Carolgees lookalike.

S: Angela Lansbury, our regular but repulsive referee, is asking for a fair fight – wait! Ric Flair is pushing her aside – he's eager to start the action!

Q: With a right hook to Rocco's jaw! That must have taken Rocco by surprise!

S: Yep – I'll bet he was expecting something more fancy, but Flair's Borstal Ballroom is doing real damage to Rocco's face from the get-go.

Q: Rocco unleashes a mighty stamp on the American's knee! Flair's down on the mat!

S: Splintersville! Ooh, that smarts! No time for writhing and moaning, though – Rollerball's up on the ropes: looks like he's preparing a full body slam...

Q: Rocco's knee meets Nature Boy's nose...

S: First blood! And it's a gusher! I think the

match is over for Ric Flair! Rollerball is strutting around the ring while his opponent crawls toward his team-mates – he's tagged Mr T.

Q: T looks real pissed as he approaches Rocco – he opens with a boot to the groin!

S: That's a dirty trick from a do-gooder – but it's sure knocked the fight out of Rocco...

Q: ...Mr T's gone for a headlock – he's bringing his ring-encrusted fist down on top of Rocco's head!

S: That fist weighs as much as a frozen turkey!

Q: Rocco's having some kind of spasm! Angela Lansbury steps forward to intervene...

S: Whoohah! That was a mistake! She's taken a 14oz sovereign ring to the bread basket!

Q: Don't worry, Spidey – she can handle Mr T!

S: I don't believe what I just saw! She poked him

Q: Easy! Easy! Easy!

S: The family favourite discards his trademark hat and cloak – Daddy really is the ultimate athlete: that stout frame is packed with protective fat and shock-absorbing gristle.

Q: He squares up to André: this is the age-old battle – abnormal height and strength (plus large frightening face) versus sheer gut-barging power!

S: André socks the near-geriatric in the neck! It's a powerful blow but I think Big Daddy's battle-blubber has protected him!

Q: He staggers back – wait! It's a ploy! He's pushing back...

S: He's going for a rope-assisted belly bounce: this could spell disaster for the acromegalic American aggressor!

Q: The belly bounce knocks the Giant into the ropes. Big Daddy moves in for the kill!

S: ...a Daddy Splash?

Q: Yes, the infamous Daddy Splash which caused the death of King Kong Kirk in front of an audience.

S: Who says wrestlin' ain't a proper blood sport?

Q: The 7ft American lies gasping on the ground as Big Daddy climbs the ropes: he grins and leaps...

S: ...contact! From the sound of it, I'd say André ain't gonna be reaching for the high shelves from now on – there's a trickle of blood leaking from the spangly Saturday superstar...

Q: ...Big Daddy's trying to get up – he's struggling, though – I think that last exertion took it all out of him...

S: André's team mates sure ain't taking it lying down – here come Hulk Hogan and 'Stone Cold' Steve Austin...

Q: ...all hell is breaking loose, Spiderman! Hulk Hogan's letting his kids down – Big Daddy can't even raise his Big Daddy ass off the floor but that don't seem to deter the film star and role model...

S: ...I think the rules have been abandoned, Quincy – Danny Boy Collins and 1960s wrestler Johnny Saint are coming to Big Daddy's aid...

Q: That's five in the ring at once, Spidey!

S: Make that four, Quincy – it seems Big Daddy's heart has given out. Again.

Q: Austin has Collins against the ropes – he's trying to force him out of the ring...

S: Meanwhile, Saint is trying out a few holds on Hogan. He has him by the hair: a knee to the ribs, a twist to the spine and Hogan's pinned to the canvas by World Champion lightweight Johnny Saint...

Q: Hollywood can't help him now, Spidey – Hogan's buffed pecs and perfect tan are just no match for Saint's old-school technique!

S: On the other side of the ring, Steve Austin's



in the eye! Mr T's screaming. Lansbury applies a bony elbow to the temple, a steel-toecap to the shin. She's one tough cookie...

Q: ...what's this? The late, great André the Giant is stepping over the ropes to help his team-mate!

S: This man weighs 500lbs and stands 7'5" tall, ladies and gentlemen. He lifts Lansbury in the air...

Q: She sure is wrigglin'!

S: There she goes! Flung out of the ring!

Q: Ouch! She's crashed in the aisle 20 rows back – the crowd is going crazy for the not-so-gentle-giant!

S: We've lost our referee! So anything goes, I guess. Say, Quincy – I can't see Mr T...

Q: I just saw him crawl under the ring, dragging some kind of welding equipment...

S: Hang on! Big Daddy's stepped into the ring!



whupping the British contender's ass - he pins Collins' arm behind his back and rams his face into a turnbuckle...

Q: ...without cracking so much as a smile.

S: He's certainly a cold fish.

Q: ...but a cold fish that kicks ass, Spiderman!

S: Quiet a minute, Quincy! What's that noise?

Q: It's coming from the ring itself - the canvas is vibrating! The wrestlers don't know what's going on!

S: It's Mr T! Bursting through the canvas in an improvised attack truck!

Q: Looks like he's adapted one of the spectators' wheelchairs using aluminium struts from the underside of the ring and ol' fashioned Yankee know-how!

S: It's a fearsome machine - he's surrounded by metal plates - surely he's indestructible now...

Q: Mr T is advancing on the victorious Johnny Saint, leaving the little feller nowhere to run...

S: We're gonna need a new mat after this bout!

Q: Things look bad for the Brits. Finally! They're playing their trump: he fought in the US as 'The Loch Ness Monster' but, here in Britain, we know him as Big Daddy's No 1 rival, Giant Haystacks!

S: The 45 stone and 6'11" titan strides into the ring. Austin finishes Collins with a neck-cracking Stone Cold Stunner and turns to the shit-hot Scot.

Q: Haystacks is slow, but he's strong! He grabs Mr T by the jewellery, drags him from his perch and lifts him clean off the floor!

S: I think T's losing his nerve as he gazes into the haggis-steeped maw of the raging Scot.

Q: Now Austin attacks! Haystacks didn't notice him sneaking to the top rope. A well timed leap puts him astride the big man's head!

S: What a spectacle! Haystacks has Stone Cold's legs wrapped round his head and his hands round his chin - Austin's leaning back as hard and far as he can!

Q: He's trying to snap his head off!

S: Haystacks has given way! He's dropped Mr T and toppled to the mat!

Q: Steve Austin's trying to make the most of his position - he's pinning Haystacks to the floor...

S: Mr T pauses to adjust his jewellery...

Q: Wait! Haystacks is down but not out, Webster - a crafty fist to the American's undercarriage gives him a chance to turn the tables!

S: He grabs Austin by the ankles! He's bending him all out of shape - oh my God, Quincy: I never thought I'd see that in the ring!

Q: The look on Mr T's face is a picture - he can't believe his eyes, either. Giant Haystacks is bending Austin into the shape of a giraffe as if he was a bendy balloon! Austin ain't so stone cold now...

S: ...more like 'stone dead', Quincy!

Q: Mr T's backing away! He's lost his bottle...

S: I pity the fool. Haystacks is angry. He turns Mr T upside down and slams him into the canvas! That was some jackhammer, Quincy!

Q: And it's lights out for Mr T - that just leaves Ric Flair - hey, where's he gone?

S: He found a taxi.

Q: So, Giant Haystacks wins by three fatalities, a submission and a runner! B

Big Daddy and Giant Haystacks both died in 1998. Mr T is currently fighting the greatest battle of his life - against cancer. But don't worry, no one will get hurt.

For more apocalyptic showdowns like this, check out World of Fighting:
<http://home.clara.net/mudskunk/fight/>



Jesse 'The Body' Ventura



WHAT CAN A successful wrestler do when it's time to quit the ring? Brian Glover and Hulk Hogan took to acting (more or less), Jimmy Saville did a lot of good work for charity but, in this age of celebrity politicians, running for office makes a strange kind of sense

"I'd never have voted for him if I thought he'd win." This is what the people of Minnesota were calling former governor Al Quie to say on the day their new state representative, Jesse 'The Body' Ventura was sworn into office.

Just as baying wrestling fans created the hero in the ring, so eager voters manufactured their own action man and took him to victory at the polls. Although growing dissatisfaction with the rival candidates certainly helped sweep Ventura home on the Reform Party ticket, could there be more to his 37 per cent share of the vote in the three-way race and the quarter-of-a-million increase in voter turnout?

After the respective elections of Ronald Reagan and Clint Eastwood, it's probably not down to the novelty of the celebrity politician but, in a time when politicians are expected to behave like celebrities, Ventura's comic book character is pure rock-n-roll and that could have tipped the balance in favour of style over content.

Ventura inherited a \$4million budget surplus when he took office and, as one Minnesota legislator commented, "It's going to take real talent to screw this up." But, less than 48 hours into the job, it starts to look as though the people of Minnesota - like wrestling fans before them - have created a monster. On top of book and TV movie deals, Ventura proposes that his wife be paid for her role as first lady. So is politics just another means for 'The Body' to cash in on celebrity?

Money's just one of the perks. Ventura, a keen Jet Ski rider, is quick to announce that he intends to repeal a recent law that not only limited the hours during which he could indulge his passion but also hit him with a hefty licence fee.

Putting his weight behind the legalisation of prostitution and cannabis, Ventura has won friends among students at the University of Minnesota. These same students continue to cheer him, even when told: "If you're clever enough to be at college then you're clever enough to work out how to pay for it."

It's not the half-baked policies they support: it's 'The Body', the character that they've made, and the idea that, because they made him, he stands for them. Time will tell whether their trust will be repaid, but how confident can you be when Ventura offers his thoughts on what life has taught him: "Win if you can. Lose if you must. But always cheat."

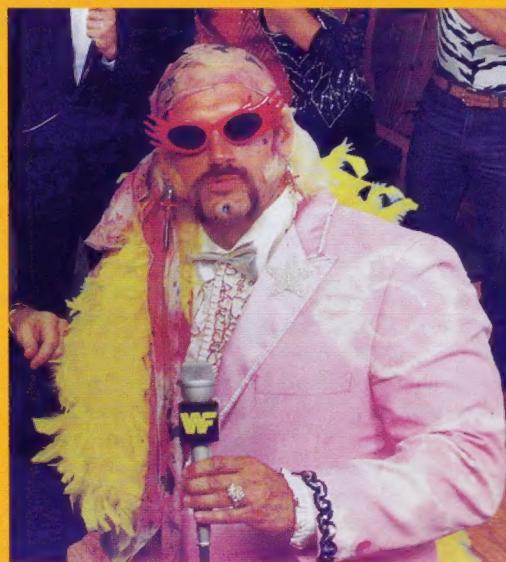
In the latest twist, Ventura has announced that

he'll be going back into the ring:
"I'm not stepping back in the ring to wrestle. I'm stepping back in the ring to be a referee, and there will be law and order. This will be a title match like no other title match they've ever seen before. Because I have the power."

Ventura claims he'll be paid \$100,000 up front for his referee gig at the WWF Summer Slam and will donate all of that to charities. However,

Wade Keller, editor of *Pro-Wrestling Torch*, says: "I have zero doubt in my mind that Jesse Ventura will come out of this with between \$1 and \$2 million." Ventura's million-plus income will be in royalties from the pay-per-view event, and subsequent video sales.

Perhaps the worlds of wrestling and politics are not so far removed from each other after all.

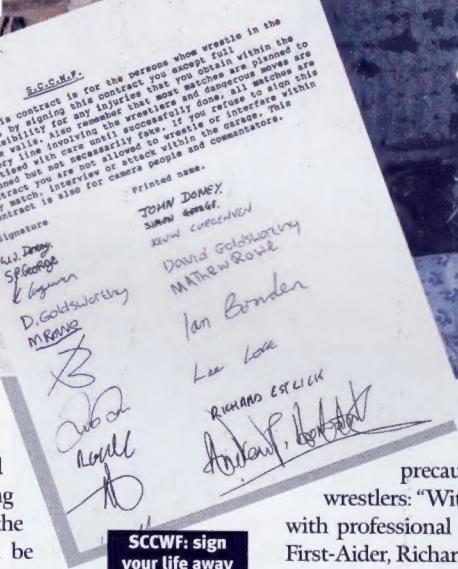


Garage daze revisited

There's a world of extreme fighting happening on your doorstep... JOE GARDINER meets the men for whom car port means hard sport



Karaoke Kid's figure four arm lock



LITTLE DID we dare guess, when this contract and the accompanying video landed on the BIZARRE desk, that we'd be entering a world of pain... a world of self-inflicted backyard wrestling pain.

We watched John Doney (AKA Dark Soul) and his friends in their exclusively-recorded *Fatal Five Way* street wrestling video and thought: "You fucking nutters". But, as the hour-long bout progressed, we started to realise that these guys were really quite serious about this.

The St Clement's Close Wrestling Federation (SCCWF) all began in 1991 when Ian Bowden (Karaoke Kid) and John Doney had a submission match in the estate park. Several people saw and thought it looked 'fun', including Wayne Dodd (Anarchy) and Kevin Curgenven (Heartbreak Kev). Says Doney: "Throughout the time we have combined many styles of martial arts: grappling, shoot-fighting, and common wrestling. Two years ago, we bought a video camera and began to video our matches. Since that time, we have adjusted our style to try to entertain the people who watch our recordings, pushing ourselves to the extreme in each match for their enjoyment."

Doney is keen to point out that the SCCWF takes every precaution to ensure the safety of its wrestlers: "Within our group we have a wrestler with professional experience (Ian Bowden) and a First-Aider, Richard Estlick. Injuries have been kept to a minimum - we know the difference between extreme and over the limit. We've had lacerations, sprains, damaged tendons and, of course, black eyes."

Asked about plans for live shows, Doney says: "The thing is we don't have the money behind us... we've planned some decent matches and worked out story lines. There are some moves we've planned which I wouldn't do just for a video camera. There's a wrestler in the WWF who took a 16ft drop through a table onto concrete - I'm toying with the idea of trying to do a 17ft drop to beat him, although he ended up with his teeth up his nose!"

The idea of a bunch of headbangers going for it



in a Cornish garage was frightening enough but then, in the pages of *Metal Rules! Magazine*, we spotted an interview with Dylan Kline and Brian Botley of the VWF and we realised that this backyard wrestling thing was bigger than we'd imagined. "The VWF is a small backyard wrestling federation that was created in 1997. We wrestle, just like the WWF, only we don't have a ring to break our falls: we take the pain like men," say Kline.

This bunch of very bored teenagers have some ten video tapes of their cards for sale - it's fucdup stuff with such scant regard for personal safety that you're left wondering why the lads aren't dead. "We've had three concussions, a fractured arm, a hyper-extended elbow, and have come just a little too close to a broken neck or two."

There are more than 150 backyard wrestling federations across the States. All of which have been catalogued at Phil Stamper's Backyard Universe on the Internet. There's also a rundown of forthcoming events, the top 10 wrestling names and an appeal for videos for a forthcoming TV show.

Far from being out for the count, wrestling is alive and well: just take a peek over the fence at your neighbour's backyard.

Far from being out for the count, wrestling is alive and well



Catfighting

We couldn't really understand the appeal of two girls biting, scratching and laying into each other, so we invited Playboy TV's *Night Calls* hostesses Emma and Chrissy to get physical for us. Very quickly we started to understand the erotic appeal of catfights...





Name: **Emma Chaesari**

Height: **5'6"**

Fighting weight: **119lb**

Best fighting move?

Half nelson. I don't often get chance to throttle Chrissy and I enjoyed that.

What's your current job?

I co-present *Night Calls*, the live sex phone-in show on The Adult Channel (*Every other Saturday night from 11 September at 12.10am*).

I'm starting to get recognised, which is a

to watch it, and I've been meaning to go down to Bethnal Green to watch the ladies bouts. I'm told I have a good right hook – I've got very good muscle tone because I used to do gymnastics for years, and I often toss Chrissy around.

What's the most outrageous thing a caller's talked about on air?

You know what the really dreadful thing is? Nothing leaves me gobsmacked these days – I just don't find anything shocking anymore. The most outrageous call I can remember was from a guy who liked to have sex with his Alsation. All I could hear was the producer was screaming in my ear: "Don't let him talk about dog sex" but there's not a lot you can do, there's no call

delay. I treat

it all as a laugh. I figure the guys watching would much rather be jolly wankers and have fun with me.

Are you a glamour puss or a tomboy when you're not on telly?

I'm a slob-around-in-jeans sort of person. I spend so much of my time in makeup that I love having absolutely nothing on my face.

Is there anything you won't do?

Well nothing's been suggested that I've refused. We'll even have a grapple on TV for you if you like. We're particularly good at getting messy, food, cans of whipped cream, that sort of thing I love.

Who's your favourite wrestler?

Big Daddy.

bit of a giggle. I even get fanmail from Americans. One guy recently listed his vital statistics: height, age, eye colour, and penis length! It was six and a half inches but he said he hadn't measured it so I bet it was tiny. I don't mind guys writing to me about their penis size – I'd be in trouble if I did, you have to see the humorous side.

You wouldn't like to change careers and be a catfighter then?

No. Mind you, I spend a lot of time spanking and whipping Chrissy on the show. That's a big favourite. Boxing's my thing. I go out of my way



Name: **Chrissy Molnar**

Height: **5'6"**

Fighting weight: **112lb**

How did you two meet?

We didn't know each other before the show. We did a casting for *American Playboy*. We didn't even do the interview together. But as soon as we met, it was like we'd known each other forever.

What's the most outrageous thing someone's talked about on air?

I don't know about outrageous, but you do get some weird guys. Don't get me wrong, we love our viewers, without them we'd have no show. The most popular topic is wanking. Wanking does it for everyone. This one guy was talking about his, you know, produce, smelling. He said he went to the garden shed and would rub himself until he was sore on his sister-in-law's shoes. So I said had he tried doing it on his father-in-law's wellies and he freaked out, like I was the pervert for suggesting it. Then there was the depressed woman who used to rub herself off on goal posts at her local football ground.

Are you a glamour puss or a tomboy when you're not modelling?

I love dressing up and going out, I couldn't slob around...

Who's your favourite wrestler?

Big Daddy. I'm from Hungary and my father used to be a wrestler there. I don't watch anymore though, the matches look too fixed.

Do you think you've got what it takes to be a pro catfighter?

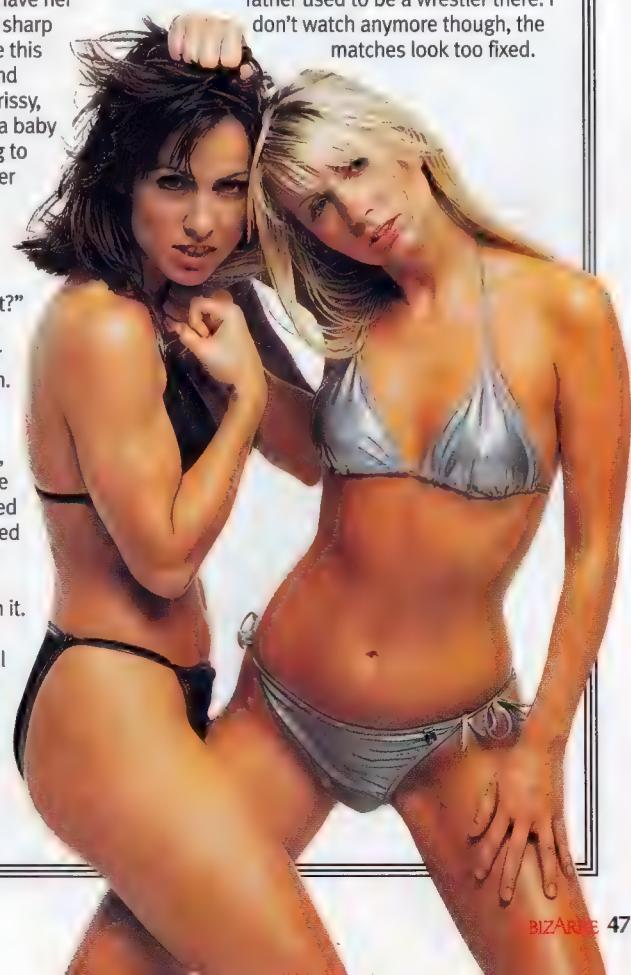
You've got us discussing whether we can have a sexy fight on the show. Well perhaps this could be the start of something. I'd want to film it of course – I've got a little camera that you can use to get into every nook and cranny – and Emma would have to direct. The fax girls [who help with taking calls and who are every bit as, er, friendly as Emma and Chrissy] could do the actual fighting. They wouldn't be allowed to climax, though. We have a rule that we can't come until the end of the show.

Were you bullied as a kid?

Yes, I was the wet kid at school. I used to get the shit kicked out of me all the time. I wish I'd known Emma then, she could have been my best friend and stood up for me. She's a tough old cookie.

Is it true that Emma always picks on you?

Yeah, but I don't mind, she does listen to me sometimes, like the time I got her to shave her pubes. She's sharp though. Once this girl rang in and said: "Oh Chrissy, I've just had a baby and I'm going to name her after you." And Emma put in: "What're you going to call her... Slut?" I get my own back in other ways, though. Last time we did a messy shoot, instead of the usual whipped cream we used custard, and I filled her knickers with it. It made her fanny look all crusty, oozy and really disgusting, and she had to sit there all show in this mess.



IM MARKS

both varied and contradictory: laughter and fear, horror and amusement, disgust and sexual stimulation. Part of the allure of catfighting is watching the release of pent-up emotion between the fighters – watching catfighters ‘losing it’ – which is the polar opposite of, for instance, professional women’s boxing match.”

Rock's off

AUSTRALIA IS TOPS for local female wrestling action. They call it ‘Rumble Rock Wrestling’ – when sweaty women with names like Sheree Sinatra (and bad taste in puce leotards) descend on your local watering hole and kick the shit out of each other. “My strategy is to use whatever it takes to beat that bitch – I’m gonna make her bleed,” the eminently-reasonable Amy Action commented before demolishing Sheree. They might not be young or particularly toothsome, but these women know how to hurt each other.

World Wanking Federation

THE WWF, MAINSTAY of American wrestling, runs a women’s division, featuring peroxide ladies keen on posing in underwear. But, if the \$110million lawsuit they’re currently involved in following allegations of sexual harassment from ex-champion Rena Mero (aka Sable) comes off, the WWF may wish it had never spun off in this direction. Mero claims that she was stripped of her title – and taunted by other



Reel to reel

THE AVERAGE CATFIGHT video only sells 3-5,000 copies worldwide, hence the high cover price (usually about £50 each). But, looking at these rather feeble bikini-ripping, hair-pulling clashes of the well endowed,

you realise they can’t cost a fortune to shoot. There are many sub-genres within the basic mould – bodybuilder fights, men vs women fights, kick boxing, Asian girls, mud and oil wrestling and even Sumo films like

Busted Sumo Cats in which hefty girls wear loincloths and chuck rice. The fetish is not limited to the white western

world – the advent of the Internet has been key in making films available worldwide – but America and Europe remain the major markets, with Japan and Australia close behind. Catfight magazines are also on the expensive side, selling for between £5 and £15, featuring rather murky photos of amateur models, selling a few thousand copies each.

“Take that, Bitch!”

FOR MOST FANS, ‘real’ seems to be the keyword when it comes to cat fights. By far the most popular videos are real brawl compilations. While staged fights, women’s wrestling and even all female caged fights are now common, CCTV clips of

women going at it (usually outside clubs or in public places like stations, parks and sports arenas, or in foreign news footage) are worth a mint. They might be grainy. They might feature more onlooker’s head than bodice-ripping, but they have an electric authenticity.

“Real fights seem to be most favoured by catfight fans,” explains Stan Williams, head of catfight specialist USA Publications. “During a real catfight, the air is electric. Reactions to catfights are



Whoa there, Nellie!

IF CATFIGHT FANS only number in the thousands, it stands to reason that catfight comic fans are going to be a minority indeed. But what girlie

wrestling fans forget is that yer bog standard superhero comic’s full of ample-breasted beauties beating the shit out of each other (generally over the fate of the universe, rather than a man,

admittedly). In the blue corner we have *Thundergirls*, P&I Press’s offering featuring ‘real life’ catfighters in stand-offs against vampires and furry aliens who rapidly develop a taste for watching women wrestling. High art it’s not and at \$15 a pop, a very expensive form of entertainment.

In the red corner is the Michelangelo of the wrestling cartoonists, Jaime Hernandez, whose recent offerings

have focused on the world of Mexican wrestling he grew up with. Having already featured wrestling heroines and plotlines in his long-running underground anthology *Love & Rockets*, his recent mini-series features firm-thighed titans to drool over.

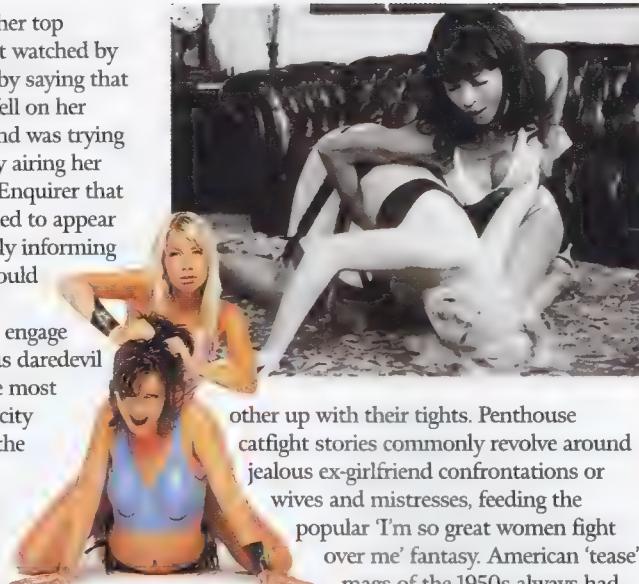
See Directory on P80 for ordering details



wrestlers – after she refused to have her top ‘accidentally’ ripped off during a fight watched by children. Other wrestlers responded by saying that she was afraid of getting hurt if she fell on her (not insignificant) breast implants and was trying to avoid the fight. Mero countered by airing her safety concerns, telling the National Enquirer that WWF representatives “routinely failed to appear at events to script the matches, merely informing the participants who should be the winner and loser.

Wrestlers are pressured to engage in ever more outrageous daredevil stunts”. Perhaps the most

outrageous publicity stunt of all was the tawdry attempt by one of Mero’s rivals to auction off her own breast implants over the Internet, attracting a bid of \$9,000 for the pair.



other up with their tights. Penthouse catfight stories commonly revolve around jealous ex-girlfriend confrontations or wives and mistresses, feeding the popular ‘I’m so great women fight over me’ fantasy. American ‘tease’ mags of the 1950s always had

room among their multiple photo stories for flatmates squabbling and scratching, invariably leading to a bit of nylon bondage. Artist Eric Stanton started off producing stories about women reduced to heavily-corseted, bound and gagged ‘dolls’ by their menfolk but, by the mid-1960s, sensing the wind of change, he was drawing mostly modern misses dominating each other after a no-holds-barred fight in their apartment, in which the object of their initial affections often became the victim. ‘Apartment’ catfights have been an established part of the fetish ever since.

Extreme-titties

“EXTREME CATFIGHTING IS about beautiful women with little or no fighting ability, willing to compete in the no-holds-barred world of Extreme Fighting,” proclaims a Catfighter Productions spokesman. They’ve zeroed in on the appeal of the ‘danger’ of fights. Extreme Fighters must protect themselves. No eye-gouging or face-scratching is allowed, and would-be hellions have to wear gum guards to stop their teeth being knocked out. If the film-makers are to be believed, the more babelicious, undressed and inexperienced the competitors, the better. Indeed, Catfighter Promotions’ application form for new female fighters asks about bra cup size before fighting experience.

A significant few of the largely male fanbase certainly fantasize about being overpowered by the battling amazons but the majority nurse the ego-bolstering idea that the women are fighting over them. “If the catfight is over the man, it is much more of a turn-on.”

Others just enjoy the primal element. As one contributor to the *Real Catfights Scrapbook* series

(a low budget compilation of first-hand accounts of brawls

identified only as ‘Phil from Los Angeles’, put it: “Men fight more often, but women fight more wild.”

Catfight highlights

NOTHING TO DO with the creaking porn mag, Penthouse or Apartment catfighting is one of the strangest sub-divisions in this hissy-fit world. Men love to watch two women tearing into each other but only if it’s in a normal room setting, the plusher the better. Sofas get overturned, vases are smashed and the women often wind up tying each



“The only legal way to slap a bitch”

THIS IS THE proud boast of a Los Angeles-based company which, seeking a lucrative and eye-catching alternative to belly dancers, lap dancers and strippers as bachelor party entertainment, hit upon catfighters: rent-a-harpies who’ll slap each other around in the privacy of your front room, and then take on the groom-to-be. “This is big, big fun for any occasion,” they promise.

Discovering it was

more than just a giggle – slightly embarrassing, slightly erotic – for many men, the firm began offering private sessions, where the lucky punter gets to choreograph his very own scrap. You can watch or invite them to take you on but, as the company warns sternly, the girls are not hookers so don’t even ask.

Thanks to Tony at Digital Darkroom and Warwick at Between the Sheets for supplying the Fantasy liquid latex (Tel: 01249 821 517)



Ho ho ho, green Giant

HIGH ABOVE THE Los Angeles skyline stand billboards emblazoned with the word ‘OBEY’ and the face of the late World Wrestling Federation champ, André The Giant. The boards (one-time Sprite ads bearing the slogan ‘OBEY YOUR THIRST’) are the late-night handiwork of graphic designer and ‘phenomenologist’ Richard Fairey, who has spent the past ten years working to make André an icon.

Since 1989, Fairey has created myriad posters, spraypaint stencils, art exhibitions, T-shirts and stickers bearing the likeness of the wrestler, who died in 1993. But why André? Explains Fairey: “He’s so ugly and big, he’s a phenomenon in and of himself.”

Fairey has also performed his billboard alterations in San Diego and San Francisco. He works without so much as a ladder, climbing up drainpipes with his materials in tow.

And don’t think for a minute that he doesn’t suffer for his art – Fairey has been jailed in five cities for vandalism.

Visit Fairey’s web site: www.andrethegiant.com



SHEPARD FAIREY



From *She Devils on Wheels* to *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, kick-ass vixens have filled our screens with visions of delinquent delight. An appreciative ANDREW LITTLEFIELD prepares to be pussy-whipped

OBSCURE B-MOVIE hacks have long since discovered that big strong women make for big strong box office bucks, but these days even mainstream TV suits have hopped on the girl power bandwagon. *Buffy* and *Xena* – the 'hottest' fantasy shows in the world – neatly represent the two basic types of fighting females established in countless old trash flicks. You've either got the Amazonian dominatrix who pussy-whips her weedy male inferiors, or the demure and gorgeous cutie who turns into an ass-kicking überbabe. Either way, prime time exploitation can be dressed up as 'role model empowerment' and everyone goes home happy.

Well, nearly everyone. The genius sleazebags who first 'pioneered' the whole genre have got every reason to feel a bit fucked off. Inspired smut hounds like Russ Meyer, Jack Hill, Ted V Mikels and Herschell Gordon Lewis had to operate at the margins of commercial cinema just to get their 'visions' up there on the screen. No-budget classics like *Faster, Pussycat! Kill! Kill!* (1965), *She-Devils on*

Wheels (1968), *The Doll Squad* (1974, ripped off by *Charlie's Angels*) and *Switchblade Sisters* (1976) were the kind of trash that only ever played at drive-ins and fleapits. Nowadays, these guys – and yes, they were nearly always guys – would be signed up for a seven picture deal quicker than you

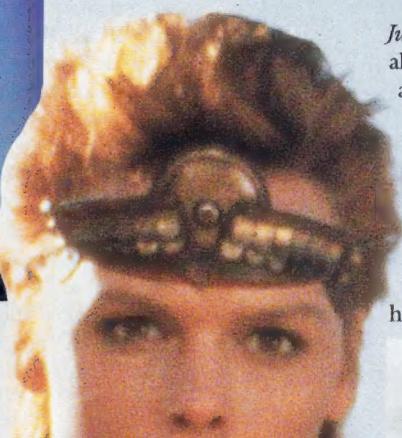


Queen bitch: *Xena Warrior Princess*

can say "Blood Orgy of the She-Devils". Sam Raimi, for example, made his name with *The Evil Dead* (1982), an extended homage to the kind of splatterfest churned out by HG Lewis in the 1960s. Today he's the 'brains' behind *Xena* and *Hercules*.

It would be wrong to pretend the exploitation kings had any kind of 'progressive' agenda when they made their 'bad girl' flicks – sex was always uppermost on their minds. It was just that, to get away with as much skin as possible, they sometimes had to strike a high moral tone, so that a shameless juvenile delinquent cash-in like the Mamie Van Doren vehicle *Running Wild* (1955) had to be sold as "The stark brutal truth about today's lost generation." Sincere warnings about 'adult content' actually promised gullible voyeurs all kinds of uncensored depravity. Sex and violence helped distinguish B-movies from the respectable Hollywood mainstream.

Relatively classy productions like *Blackboard Jungle* and *Rebel Without a Cause* (both 1955) had already highlighted the 'problem' of tearaway teens, and established there was a new youth market eager for cheap thrills and rock-n-roll hits. The smaller studios, quick to follow the dollar, were soon grinding out hundreds of cheapo potboilers that upped the cleavage count and downplayed anything expensive – stars, scripts, Technicolor, elaborate sets or fancy costumes. Stories 'ripped from today's headlines' could be shot on dance halls, schools, prisons and gas stations.

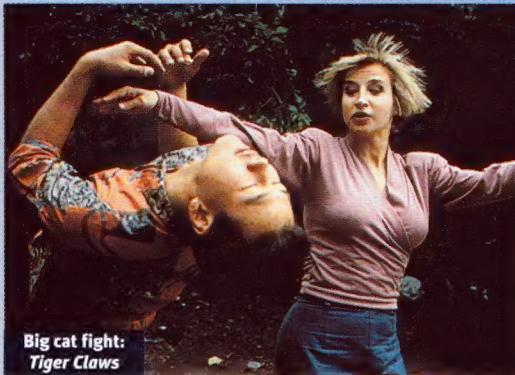


Above: *Faster, Pussycat!*
Left: *Red Sonja*

ROUND
6



Faster, pussycat!



Go go in the garage:
*Good Morning And
Goodbye*



The z-grade auteurs loved to put a 'sexy' twist on the genre staples of biker gangs, prison movies, and juvenile delinquency, gender swapping the 'bad lad' archetype for formidable, tough-talking ultravixens. These crazy chicks were invariably "trigger tough and ready for anything" (*Girls on the Loose*, 1958); "smart...pretty...and all bad" (*Confessions of A Sorority Girl*, 1957); "born good with a desire to be bad" (*Bad Girl*, 1957). They were as nasty as the boys and twice as much trouble. They could be man-haters or man-eaters.

The teen exploitation movies often played on a fear of the female. Bad Girls assumed the trappings of masculine power and threatened gender roles; they refused the traditional role of mother and housewife and undermined family life. Their weapon of choice – the flickknife – was a highly phallic castration symbol. And they looked great in tight cashmere sweaters. Of course, the early outlaw babes had to pay the price for their unfettered high spirits and sexual freedom; death, madness or jail were the standard forms of retribution. Only a final conversion to the forces of niceness, or the love of a good man, could possibly redeem them.

WOMEN ON WHEELS

THE SUCCESS OF *The Wild One* (1953), with Marlon Brando as a sneering proto-Elvis, kick-started a whole cycle of biker and hot rod flicks that lasted until the start of the 1970s. Independent studios, like the pre-eminent crud factory American

International Pictures, were too quick to see the potential in greaser heroines with a need for speed – *Hot Rod Girl* (1956), *Untamed Youth* (1957), *Drag Strip Girl* (1958), *Hot Car Girl* (1958), and *Speed Crazy* (1959) all put women centre stage and behind the wheel of a souped-up mean machine.

The leather-clad iconography of the biker girls also allowed film-makers to broach one of their favourite taboo topics – lesbianism. True girl-on-girl action was thin on the ground, but heavily coded gestures and outfits clearly hinted that these sisters were doing it for themselves. Men were no longer objects of desire, but competitors or victims. Feminist self-sufficiency could be portrayed as separatist man-hating. In *Faster, Pussycat! Kill! Kill!*, pneumatic gang leader Varla (Tura Satana) is the 'butch' dom who literally stabs her weak 'femme' follower in the back, while the dykey Queenie, from *She-Devils on Wheels*, picks out men from a 'stud line', fends off boy bikers with chains, and keeps her

crew together with a mixture of sadism and 'tough love'. As the movie's theme tune, written by HG Lewis puts it, "We're swinging chicks on motors/ We're man-eaters on wheels!"

Other 1960s obscurities – *The Mini-Skirt Mob* (1968), *The Hellcats* (1968), *Hell's Belles* (aka *Girl in the Leather Suit*, 1969), and *Sisters in Leather* (1969) – mined the same formula with diminishing returns. The growth of the counter-culture, and the first stirrings of feminism, began to make these pictures seem like dated kitsch – free-loving hippy chicks were digging psychedelia, not the kind of white trash rockabilly associated with the biker flicks. By the early 1970s, relaxed censorship laws and the growth of hardcore porno gave film-makers the freedom to create violent hybrids that had little need for the coy evasions of earlier decades. Lesbianism was no longer the love that dared not speak its name, but a chic 'lifestyle choice' on a par with wife-swapping and coke snorting. ►

Kill! Kill!



WOMEN IN PRISONS

BY CONTRAST, THE women's prison movie reached its 'creative' peak in the early 1970s, as Roger Corman rushed out *The Big Doll House* (1971), *The Big Bird Cage* (1972) and *Caged Heat* (1974) in rapid succession. These lurid melodramas revitalised a genre that dates back at least as far 1932, when *Ladies of the Big House* set down the standard plotline for the WIP picture – beautiful innocent ends up behind bars and is guided through the system by a tough but sympathetic old lag. In leering dross like *Women's Prison* (1955), *Girls in Prison* (1956), and *Reform School Girl* (1957), cruel

wardens and mean-minded bull dykes fail to crush the spirit of our sweet, plucky heroine, who by the movie's end has become a fully-fledged tough girl. The rules of male society are junked in favour of a hysterical female collectivism that corrupts even the cleanest con.

The hothouse prison atmosphere also instantly brought to mind certain recurring scenarios – lesbo trysts, communal showers, no-holds barred catfights, topics all comprehensively covered by the concurrent

spate of girls' school dramas. Corman, always determined to get down with 'the kids', simply added to the mix liberal doses of emancipatory feminism and Black Power rhetoric. In *The Big Doll House* and *The Big Bird Cage*, both directed by Tarantino-favourite Jack Hill, retro-icon Pam Grier played streetwise dames who didn't take any shit from the white man, a part she perfected in the blaxploitation hits *Foxy Brown* (1974, another Jack Hill gem) and *Sheba Baby* (1975).

The poster for Jonathan Demme's *Caged Heat* had the tagline "Women's Prison, USA – Rape, riot and revenge! White hot desires melting cold prison steel!" Cult Scream Queen Barbara Steele starred as

McQueen, the repressed, wheel-chair bound warden who runs Connorville Maximum Security Prison, a women's prison with its own program of "corrective physical therapy." The nubile, bisexual inmates revolt against McQueen's sadistic abuses and seize control of the prison. Sadly, *Caged Heat*'s clumsy Marxist allegory – the downtrodden casting off their shackles – is rather undermined by a constant stream of soft focus T&A shots.

As the memory of 1960s radicalism faded, the collective rebellion of the girl gangs gave way to an emphasis on the individual fighting female, buffed but beautiful babes who can take on men at their own game. Their role models aren't jailbait hoodlums or vampish tramps – they want to be John Wayne, Clint Eastwood, Bruce Lee, tough guys standing outside society, making their own rules, kicking the shit out of anyone who gets in their way.

FEMALE ACTION HEROES

INFLUENTIAL FILMS AS diverse as *Alien* (1979), *Ms 45 – Angel of Vengeance* (1981), *A View To A Kill* (1985), *Red Sonja* (1985), *Terminator 2: Judgement Day* (1991) *Thelma and Louise* (1991) and *Blue Steel* (1994) shared powerful, post-feminist female leads, and helped to turn actresses like Sigourney Weaver, Linda Hamilton, Brigitte Nielsen, Grace Jones and Geena Davis into mainstream action movie stars.

Back then, 1980s martial arts brawler Cynthia Rothrock functioned as a female Chuck Norris, a

Tura Satana

The original kick-ass kitten tells MARC ISTER why she was the perfect choice for the leading lady in Russ Meyer's *Faster, Pussycat! Kill! Kill!*

You started doing martial arts young, didn't you?
When I was 10 years old, I got raped by five guys. After that my father started to bounce me off the walls until I learned to protect myself. That's how I learned Karate. He was 300lbs and large but I finally got to the point where I could bounce him.

And you were in a girl gang?

I was about 14 or 15 in Chicago. You either had to belong to a gang or die. We had leather motorcycle jackets, jeans and boots and we kicked butt. We used to strap razor blades behind our necks, carry switch blades in our boots, always wore gloves, because you never knew who was going to punch you. I guess you could say I was a juvenile delinquent, I got sent to reform school.

Why was that?

When I first went to high school the senior girls ganged up on me and they said, "We don't want you in our school," so I asked, "Why not?" and they said it was because their boyfriends were watching me. So I wound up in a big fight and broke a couple of arms and a few ribs and ended up in reform school.

Then you went to work as an exotic dancer?

Yeah. I knew all the big strippers: Rose Le Rose, Maxine Martin, 'The Skyscraper Girl' and Stunning Smith, 'The Purple Lady'. Of course there was one that I don't get along with. In fact me and her had a big knockdown, dragout fight in St Louis, Missouri. Her name was Princess Domain, 'The Cherokee Half-Breed.' She used to have a boyfriend with her and

they both decided my boobs moved too much when I walked. So she came up behind me and started to scratch. I took her and threw her up against the wall. Her boyfriend comes at me and I give him a Karate kick right in the crotch.

What was your first showbiz break?

My first TV appearance was on *Hawaiian Eye*, then I went to MGM for *The Girl from UNCLE*. I had small spy parts in both *UNCLE* shows. I was a regular on *The Greatest Show on Earth* as a web girl or dancer with Jack Palance.

How did you hook up with Russ Meyer?

I'd heard about *Eve and the Handyman* and *The Immoral Mr Teas*, but they were not my forte, so I never bothered to see them. But *Faster, Pussycat!* was different from anything he'd done before. It really turned out well. There was only one argument. I busted my hand. I had a bad temper...

Why do you think the film made such an impact?

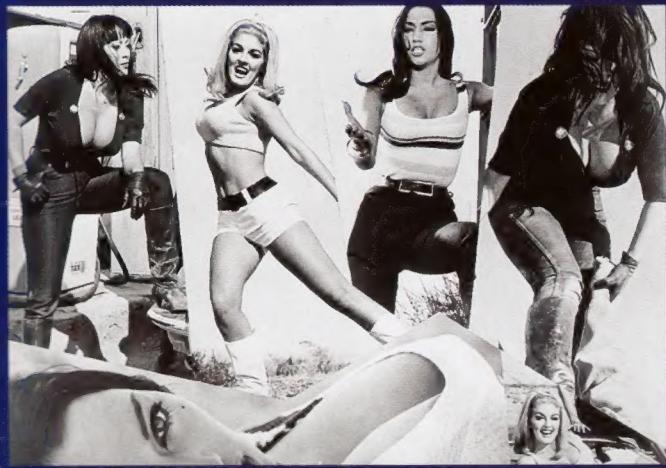
Most of the pictures around had guys doing the rough and tumble, which made it strange for girls to be doing it. Girls say they really like my part because it shows we can do it too. When it was first released it did nothing. Then, when Russ re-released it, it took off like gangbusters.

After *Pussycat*, you made two films with Ted V Mikels, *Astro Zombies* and *The Doll Squad* – was the latter the model for *Charlie's Angels*?

Aaron Spelling (producer of *Charlie's Angels*) told me he saw *The Doll Squad* but thought that three girls would be sufficient. But when you think about it, *The Doll Squad* had only three main characters, me, Francine York and Sherri Vernon. The rest of the girls were just there. Unfortunately Ted cut most of my best stuff out of *The Doll Squad*, where we did a lot of Karate kicks and throws and stuff like that.

When did you realise you had become a cult icon?

Years later, at a Variety Arts Theatre show for Ted Mikels, they showed *Astro Zombies* and *The Doll Squad*. They all wanted to talk to me. They wanted to talk about *Astro Zombies* and *Faster, Pussycat!*. I even had guys who wanted their chests autographed. One guy said: "Why don't you start selling your bras, T-shirts, etc?" So I said: "And what am I going to wear?"



Thelma and Louise



terrible actor who could be relied upon to deliver some good, old-fashioned ultraviolence. But in Hong Kong, film-makers were equating Karate kicks with sexy chicks and the resulting explosion of sex- and-violence Category III movies at the end of the 1980s brought us female stars like Amy Yip, Chingamy Yau and Michelle Yeoh. These high-kicking, ball-breaking warriors looked like supermodels rather than Sumos, and Hollywood took notice. Yeoh went on to bravely overcome the traditional big screen death sentence of becoming a Bond girl who didn't have to have all her 'problems' solved by a willing 007. In fact, she ended up saving Piers Brosnan's ass in *Tomorrow Never Dies* (1997).

These new fighting females didn't have to apologise, or be 'punished', for their threatening power nor was female strength automatically equated with butch lesbianism. They could be pretty, smart and tough (Sigourney Weaver's Ripley), or a 'kooky' babe who just happened to be a weapons wiz (Anne Parillaud in *Nikita*). Female viewers were encouraged to identify with the independence and resilience shown by these characters. Male viewers, as always, got the chance to see their favourite pin-ups dressed in the kind of skin-tight, 'athletic' costuming that can so easily be justified by a slam-bang action movie plot.

Post Generation-X, TV faves *Xena* and *Buffy* add an 'ironic', 1990s twist to the fighting females genre along with some rather 1970s production values. We're not meant to take their exploits too seriously, or worry that these are the kind of sex symbols who would slice your dick off just for being a worthless bloke.

They're rather wholesome 'bad girls' - Buffy would be a grade-A student if it weren't for her vampire problem, and Xena is constantly battling the forces of evil. They still give good fight, but their enemies are now supernatural beings rather than real-life scumbags and authority figures. There is none of the anger, hatred, or unsavoury voyeurism that make the best tough chick flicks such guilty pleasures. But that's what happens when you take rough-and-ready genre icons and turn them into smooth money machines. **B**



Blue Steel



Terminator 2

WILD WOMEN

1. Valerie Solanas

Playwright Solanas, author of the SCUM (Society for Cutting Up Men) manifesto, was the original riot grrrl, an unrepentant man-hater who extended the concept of 'performance art' by shooting Andy Warhol in the gut at point blank range. The pop art pioneer recovered from his injuries and proudly showed off his scars; Solanas spent the rest of her life in and out of mental institutions. Her 'career' was celebrated in Marry Harron's indie-fem flick *I Shot Andy Warhol* (1996).

2. Lydia Lunch

Gothy high punk priestess known for her 'confrontational' stage shows. Lydia (and like-minded 'new man' Henry Rollins) used to dim the lights at her gigs so she could scream abuse at hapless audience members; her adoring fans were more than happy to pay good money for this kind of verbal (and physical) abuse. She also starred in Richard Kern's self-explanatory short film *Fingered* (1986), and has recently written a frankly filthy 'sexual autobiography', *Paradoxia* (Creation).

3. Bjork

It's always the quiet ones you have to watch out for. The Icelandic elf normally comes over all 'hello birds, hello trees', but in 1996 she was captured on film attacking TV journo Julie Kaufman. A 'stressed out' Bjork landed at Bangkok airport and promptly set about the unfortunate Kaufman, pulling her hair and slamming the reporter's head on the floor. The singer later claimed Kaufman was harassing her young son Sindri. Apologies were offered, and Kaufman declined to press charges.

4. Grace Jones

Statuesque 1980s model, singer and actress who sported a band-aid over her eyebrow, posed in boxing gloves, and played a kick-boxing bad girl in the Bond film *A View to a Kill* (1985). Jones is still best-remembered for 'bitch-slapping' effete Northern chat show host Russell Harty on live TV, because he dared to turn his back on her while talking to his other guests.

5. Courtney Love

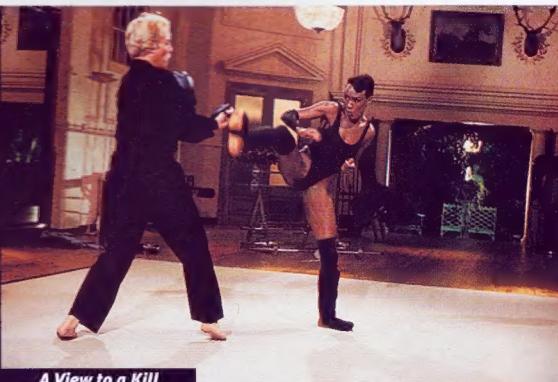
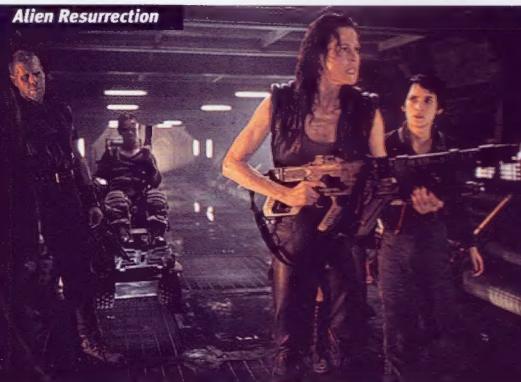
Where to begin? The world's most famous rock widow has made a career out of picking fights with journalists, fans, and fellow musicians. Kurt and Courtney were fond of leaving threatening messages on their 'enemies' answer phones, and in 1995 Love was ordered to attend 'anger management' courses after she tried to choke Kurt's former squeeze Kathleen Hanna, singer with riot grrrl band Bikini Kill. Courtney appears to have 'mellowed' in recent years, but maybe that's because the only hacks who get to interview her these days have to sign a form guaranteeing not to ask her any controversial questions.



Bjork goes puffin mad in Bangkok



Alien Resurrection



A View to a Kill